

Address by the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, Primate of Canada to the Joint meeting of the Canadian Church Historical Society and the Diocesan Archivists on the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of the General Synod Archives, November 1, 2007, St. Paul's Bloor Street, Toronto.

“Resolved, That, the Upper House concurring, In order to assist in preserving data relative to the past of our Church in Canada, the Primate and the Prolocutor are hereby requested to appoint a Committee of five to co-operate with the Registrar in locating, listing and collecting such material as is of historical value; the Committee to be known as the Archives Committee of the Church of England in Canada. “ Journal of General Synod Proceedings, 1927, p 93.

And from the following Journal of General Synod Proceedings, 1931, p. 40...

“Your Committee has endeavoured to carry on its work chiefly by correspondence, the distance being so great as to prevent the holding of meetings. It conceives its duty to be that of encouraging the preservation of data relative to the Church in Canada. It aims to enlist personal interest in this work on the part of selected persons in each Diocese. The Committee has no thought of making one central collection. It rather seeks to encourage Diocesan collections and aims to centralize only where these are not being provided. The keeping of the General Synod records are necessarily entrusted to the General Synod Archivist. Your Committee will further encourage the cataloguing of records that are to be found at the various centres, and type—written copies of these will be exchanged and duplicates deposited in the Archives of the General Synod. In this way important material will be conserved and will be ready to hand for those who wish to investigate or to write the history of our Church.

Very important work has been done already by some of the Dioceses, notably New Westminster, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and a very large and valuable provincial collection of books and other historical material has been made by the province of Rupert's Land and is located in Winnipeg.

Your Committee desires to place on record its conviction that the time has come to acquaint our Church people more fully with the great leaders, their heroic deeds, and the growing unity of our Canadian Church. Only by such consideration of the past, as we suggest, can the duty of the present be discharged and the vision of the future of our Church in this Dominion looked upon by the rising generation. (Sgd,) W. Bertel Heeney, Convener.”

Canon V in the General Synod Handbook reminds us that there are essentially three kinds of work associated with the Archives... Acquisition, Research and Resource.

Acquisition

The Canon speaks of the responsibility of the Archives “to collect, arrange, describe and preserve the permanent records and related papers of the General Synod and its committees, council, boards, and commissions.” Also, “the official papers of the Primate, the General Secretary and all other officers and employees of the General Synod.”

To that end the Archives houses over 2,500 boxes of textual records, 50,000 photographs, extensive sound and moving image materials, the national periodical collection, and the historical library—all preserved in environmentally controlled space. “The reservoir of our corporate memory” wrote Michael Peers, the 11th Primate.

To see the collection in its present state and condition would truly delight the heart of Dr. Thomas Millman who in the earliest days of the Archives worked very hard in collecting the personal papers of Anglican Bishops and Missionaries. For him it was “a labour of love.” For the Missionary Society of the Anglican Church of Canada, it was a matter of enormous importance to preserve the records of historic significance in relation to its work and witness in Canada.

In her report to General Synod meeting in June of this year in Winnipeg, Archivist Nancy Hurn spoke of the volume of work associated with continuing acquisition of archival material. “In the move from 600 Jarvis to 80 Hayden Street, there was discovery of some unique materials that lay dormant in the old part of the Church House building for many years.” The further appraisal, arrangement and description work needed for these acquisitions will be added to the backlog of archival work activity.

The Archives continues to receive materials of enduring historic value from National Office departments, as well as from individuals and organizations of national significance. The last triennium saw a number of acquisitions from former staff of the Residential Schools.

Research

The Canon speaks of records pertaining to the history and activities of the Anglican Church of Canada. To that end the Archives serves the church in times of celebration, crisis and transition.

With respect to celebration, there are moments in the history of this beloved Church and of its 4 Ecclesiastical Provinces and its Dioceses “from coast to coast-to-coast” which we mark as milestones in our heritage as people of faith. For example, the Dioceses of Huron celebrating its sesquicentennial this year. One hundred and fifty years ago, Benjamin Cronyn, the first person to be called to Episcopal ministry through an electoral process – that is through

a Synod of Clergy and Laity gathered for the said purpose, was consecrated as Bishop in the Church of God with jurisdiction and pastoral responsibility in the newly formed Diocese of Huron. Celebration of this Anniversary has been informed by the researching of materials in the Archives of the Diocese, the General Synod and the Church of England and possibly the Church of Ireland. Since Cronyn was of Irish descent and never forgot his Church of Ireland upbringing. Indeed, that upbringing he brought to bear on the newly formed Diocese. Research of such records as these moved Philip Carrington in his history of the Anglican Church in Canada he wrote “ the new Diocese of Huron under its energetic and forceful Bishop, became a powerhouse for the whole Canadian Church. On Sunday, past October 28, through the presence of the National House of Bishops, every Diocese of the Canadian Church was present with Huron to celebrate its 150th Anniversary. Nine thousand people were gathered in the John Labatt Centre for a splendid celebration of the Holy Eucharist with the renewal of Baptismal vows. The headline on the front page of the local paper the next day read “Anglicans Celebrate the Gift of Fellowship”.

With respect to crisis, the work of the Archives is invaluable in providing much needed information from the records it holds. This truth has been underlined through the experience of the Anglican Church of Canada coming to terms with its legacy of affiliation with the Residential Schools program, an initiative of the federal government of the day to assimilate the Aboriginal peoples of this land. Because in large measure the government kept limited records, those kept by the Churches have been primary material in responding to inquiries made by the government and by former students seeking compensation for abuse they suffered in the schools, for alternate dispute resolution processes and for the Common Experience Payment. One of the terms of the Residential School settlement agreement was that all records held by the Anglican Church of Canada would be accessible for such purposes.

This has been what Nancy Hurn has described as an “extraordinary use “ of archival records. To this task staff have devoted an “extraordinary” amount of time and effort. Among those engaged in this research is one whose title is Program Assistant, Residential Schools. Of her work, she says “I have always wanted to be able to help former residential school survivors but never knew how to go about it or where to start and when the opportunity presented itself through an appointment at Church House, I knew this was it. “ She goes on to say “I am just one of many people who have helped the survivors on their healing journey but I feel that the work I have done and do here at Church House is extremely important. I feel truly blessed to be able to help.” The Anglican Church is truly blessed to have staff that views their work in this way. Their diligence in this research asked of them is enabling the Anglican Church of Canada to live the Apology offer by Michael Peers, the 11th Primate. Your work in Archival research gives credibility to our commitment to walk with our aboriginal people on a journey toward healing, reconciliation and new life.

The next phase of the Church and the nation coming to terms with the legacy of the Residential Schools is the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Through numerous major national events, regional gatherings and local events in communities, former students will be encouraged to recall their experiences and tell their stories. Archivists from various churches along with representatives from Library and Archives Canada and other agencies will be working with local archivists in helping the students to tell their story. We can anticipate another large volume of work in researching records for this purpose.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners have not yet been named although the process is well underway. There is however an Interim Executive Director who has been requested by the Minister of Indian Residential School Resolutions Canada to examine the issue of Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. There are four questions to be considered:

- 1) How many children died?
- 2) What were their names?
- 3) What was the cause of death?
- 4) Where are they buried?

Preliminary research is underway in the Archives. To date the Archivist reports a review of 120,000 pages of holdings in the General Synod Archives and some 2,200 photographs. Through this work to date, 22 children are reported to have died while in Residential Schools. This is a particularly difficult piece of work but necessary in the telling of the whole truth about the Residential Schools. When the research is completed and all who died have been identified, a national monument honouring their memory and acknowledging the grief of their families and communities will be erected. It is now known that in time there will be a National Research Centre concerning residential schools and no doubt the Archives of those who are signatories of the Settlement Agreement and the Amending Agreement will conference to provide an important service in ongoing research of the records in their care.

With respect to transition, the Archives provide valuable information as to how we came to be organized as a Church – in Provinces, in diocese, in a General Synod.

At General Synod 2004, a resolution was passed calling for “a review of the governance of General Synod with a view to enhancing the work and mission of the General Synod.” A Working Group on Governance was appointed. In its report to General Synod in June, 2007 the

Working Group cited Robert Machray, Metropolitan of Rupert's Land and first Primate of All Canada, who identified the following reasons for forming a General Synod in 1893.

- United practical work through systematizing, unifying and consolidating the work of the church in its various departments for the purpose of improved mission to the north and to the west. "Surely" he said "the vast mission field will have its needs much more clearly recognized and more adequately met, if the whole church has them kept before it, and is made to feel its responsibility."
- Provision of any necessary additional services so that there may be, if possible, a uniformity of use throughout the Dominion....
- Stating the mind of the church on social, moral, and religious questions may be needed. In its report to General Synod the Governance Group said "Archbishop Machray clearly saw the purpose of General Synod as reflecting the church's mission of proclamation, building community and service. While we would describe them in different terms and on a wider perspective, in general his reasons remain the purpose of General Synod." The report went on to say "Structures do not in themselves fulfill the missions of the church but they can either enable or inhibit its fulfillment. The goal of the work in Act 54 of the 2004 General Synod was to assist the General Synod to be more enabling. The Council of General Synod, recognizing the reality of the life of our church, enlarged that task to include the provinces and dioceses..."

At General Synod 2007 a resolution requesting the Primate, after consultation with the House of Bishops, to initiate a discussion with the provinces and dioceses regarding possible reform of the provincial organization and the diocesan organization of the Anglican Church of Canada was passed.

The Working Group said "if the said resolution is passed by General Synod further work would need to be done in preparation of a series of papers expanding on the issues of jurisdiction, the history and evolution of the provinces, dioceses and The General Synod and possible options to assist in promoting and furthering their decisions."

One cannot imagine such conversations taking place without reference to a huge amount of research through the Archives. The outcome of their work may well be a re-mapping of at least some part of the Anglican Church of Canada – taking into account a survey and analysis of how provincial and diocesan boundaries came into being and a systematic study

of provinces and dioceses in relation to geography, transport patterns and economic trends and population bases.

Resource

The Canon mandates the General Synod Archives to work with archivists in the ecclesiastical provinces, the dioceses and related agencies including religious orders, theological colleges and ecumenical coalitions. To that end the Archivist works in co-operation with a network of archivists across the country – resourcing them with the skills necessary to carry out their work with competence, establishing and maintaining archival standards and giving attention to matters of common concern.... such as the impact of the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the establishing of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the impact of federal and provincial privacy legislation.

At Church House we have an Archivist, Nancy Hurn and Assistant Archivist, Laurel Parson. Across the country, I am told there are only 5 salaried Diocesan Archivists, several who receive a modest honorarium for their work and many others who volunteer their time and expertise in this very important work.

I know it has been custom for archivists within Ecclesiastical Provinces to gather but never has there been a national gathering such as this.... this is the first and how appropriate that it should be in this year when the church gives thanks for 80 years of service provided by the Archives. I view your work as just that – a service, a ministry, a vocation. You have been called and commissioned to be a keeper of our story.

“Of all national assets” wrote Arthur G. Doughty, “Archives are the most precious, they are the gift of one generation to another and the extent of our care for them marks the extent of our civilization.”

For your care of these precious assets – in our General Synod, Provincial and Diocesan Archives, I thank you on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada. My prayer is that you will always find your work to be challenging and rewarding and my hope is that your work will always be acknowledged with respect and gratitude by the Church and by society at large.

Presentation of Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation.

(As attached)



*In Recognition of the 80th Anniversary
of The Establishing of the General Synod Archives*

and

With Gratitude for Outstanding Service

to Church and Community

This certificate is presented on the occasion of

A National Gathering of Provincial and Diocesan Archivists Meeting in Toronto, Ontario

November 1, 2007

Signed on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada

Archbishop Fred Hiltz

Primate

Caring for our Past, Caring for our Future